

## Conclusion

The Second Vatican Council teaches:

*“The Books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.”*

*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 1965, 3.11*

The Old Testament is a part of the history of that salvation and is a portion of our inheritance.

Jesus – the Messiah (when at last He came) stated that the Old Testament is impossible to annul (John 10:35). He uses the typical Jewish phrase *“It is written”* when introducing a statement that is authoritative and not open to question. Examples include: *“facing the tempter”* (Matthew 4: 4, 7-10), certain events will take place: *going to Gethsemane* (Mt. 26:31). For Jesus, the words of Scripture (*graphe*) were decisive (e.g. *reference to divorce*: Matthew 19: 3-9).

Indeed, throughout the New Testament, there are fifty one references to *graphe* i.e. a part or parts of the Old Testament. The New Testament writers referred to the writings from the Old Testament as *“the oracles of God”*.

*cf. Romans 3:2, Hebrews 5:12 and 1 Peter 4:11*

“This is what God asks of you  
To act justly, love tenderly  
And to walk humbly with your God”

Micah 6.8

*As God has dealt justly with his people, so they are to deal justly  
with one another*

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## Society of African Missions (SMA)



# Living Faith Means Living Justly

## Session 1: Justice in the Bible The Old Testament

# Justice in the Bible – the Old Testament

## Justice centres round being faithful to the demands of a relationship

- With God
- With Family, Community and especially the poor and needy
- With Creation

The Just person is faithful in a concrete way to these demands and responsibilities.

## God is Just

Zephaniah 3.5 - *“Every morning without fail, he brings justice to his people.”*

Zechariah 8:8

Ps 103: 8-10 - *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.”*

**Exodus** - a fundamental experience of God's Saving Justice

Ex 2: 24, 3:9 *“God heard their groaning - God remembered his Covenant...”*

Ex 15:2

Ex 15:13

## The Book of Psalms

Ps 97:2 - *“righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.”*

Ps 99:4 - *“The King is mighty, he loves justice.... in Jacob you have done what is just and right.”*

Ps 97:11 - *“Light shines on the righteous and joy on the upright in heart [the just].”*

## The Just Individual

- fear of the Lord. Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33. Is 11:1-2.

- cares for the poor, needy and creation and also preserves the peace and wholeness of the community

- upholds the weak and stumbling. Job 4:3-4

- defends the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9

- care for their land and animals. Proverbs 12:10; 27:23

- gives generously to those in need. Psalm 112:9



## The Others – “anawim” (widows, orphans, foreigners)

Exodus 22:21-22 - *“You shall not wrong the foreigner, neither shall you oppress him, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. You shall not take advantage of any widow or fatherless child. If you take advantage of them at all, and they cry at all to me, I will surely hear their cry.”*

Ps 146: 1-10.

Deut 14:29

**The Prophets** - Call for fidelity to the threefold relationship with God, the Community (especially the poor and needy) and Creation.

Amos 4: 1-2; 6: 4-6. Lack of concern for the oppressed is condemned.

Amos 5: 21-24 - *“I hate and despise your feasts; I take no pleasure in your solemn feasts... Let me have no more of the din of your chanting; no more of your drumming on harps. But let justice flow like water, and integrity like an unfailing stream.”*

Is 6: 5 – 7

Is: 1:11-17

**The Ideal King**, not just for Israel - but for the whole world

Is: 2:2-4.

Is 32:1-5 - *“Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice. Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land. Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will hearken. The mind of the rash will have good judgment, and the tongue of the stammerers will speak readily and distinctly. The fool will no more be called noble, nor the knave said to be honourable”.*

## A Covenant of Justice

Jeremiah 7:4-11; 22:13-16 - *true faith is doing justice*

Ezekiel 36: 24-28 - *“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.”*

